

PEOPLE WHO CARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

# BROTHER BENNO'S NEWSLETTER

*Uplifting the Dignity of Those We Serve*

NOVEMBER 2026



## BECAUSE OF YOU, GRATITUDE GOES FURTHER

BY GABRIEL BALLENTINE, Food Recovery and Redistribution Director

At Brother Benno's, our mission is rooted in upholding the dignity of those we serve. This November, we are especially thankful for the volunteers and donors whose generosity makes that mission possible. Your time, dedication, and financial support help us recover quality food and get it into the hands of neighbors who need it.



I assumed the role of Food Recovery and Redistribution Director in September, building upon the tremendous work accomplished by the Brother Benno's team before my arrival. Their dedication, together with the ongoing support of our volunteers and donors, has established a strong foundation for the continued growth of our food recovery efforts.

Together, we have developed one of the most sophisticated food redistribution operations in North County. We complete more weekly food rescues than any other organization in Feeding San Diego's network, serving 23 stores and coordinating 86 recurring weekly pick-ups. In Fiscal Year 2026, we rescued 1.7 million pounds of food from grocery stores while distributing 1.3 million pounds to our guests at the center.

Behind these numbers are volunteers showing up week after week,

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*and more!*

Platinum Transparency 2026 Candid.

Charity Navigator FOUR-STAR 2026

www.brotherbenno.org

# THE DIGNITY OF WORK: BUILDING SELF-SUFFICIENCY THROUGH EMPLOYMENT

BY STEVE SHUMM, Deputy Director of Recovery Support Services

For someone rebuilding their life after addiction, finding employment represents much more than earning a paycheck. It is an opportunity to restore confidence, develop responsibility, and rediscover the dignity that comes from being self-sufficient. At the Brother Benno's Recovery Support Program, we believe meaningful work is an essential part of building a foundation for lasting recovery.

Many who enter our program have experienced years of unemployment, homelessness, and dependence on others. Addiction often strips away the routines and responsibilities necessary for independent living. Returning to work provides an opportunity to rebuild those skills while developing a renewed sense of purpose and personal accomplishment.

Throughout our 26-week program, we emphasize the importance of employment and the responsibilities that come with it. Showing up on time, following directions, managing finances, working with others, and honoring commitments are practical lessons in self-sufficiency. Each day presents an opportunity to demonstrate reliability, build confidence, and take ownership of their future.

But employment alone is not enough. During the evenings, our participants continue their recovery through counseling, meetings, and working the Twelve Steps. The principles of honesty, humility, integrity, accountability, and service become the foundation for how they approach their responsibilities during the day. They learn that recovery is not something practiced only in meetings, but something demonstrated through their actions, decisions, and relationships.

This combination of productive work during the day and personal growth through recovery at night helps create lasting change. Earning a living becomes more than financial independence; it becomes evidence of growing responsibility and self-respect.

At Brother Benno's, our philosophy remains a hand up, not a hand out. We provide the structure, guidance, and opportunity,

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*"I am a client of Brother Benno's for many years. They are God sent. I lost my whole family. I was homeless for 7 years, been in many shelters and programs but because of the caring staff, too many names of volunteers, just wanted to say thank you and God Bless."*

M.E. Lopez, Guest
Brother Benno Center




**SATURDAY**
**NOVEMBER 7**
**9:00 AM**
***No reservation required***

*"The personal satisfaction I receive from seeing firsthand what Brother Benno's does for the homeless makes it all worthwhile."*
*~*
*John Jarvie*

## Brother Benno Center

**Monday - Friday**
6:30 AM – 11:00 AM

**Saturdays**
Brunch
9:30 AM - 11:30 AM

**INDOOR MARKET**
6:30 AM - 10:00 AM

**Closed**
Sundays & Federal Holidays*

* Breakfast & sack lunches will be available on most holidays. Exceptions are:
New Year's Day
Memorial Day
Independence Day
Labor Day

## Board of Directors

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

**Jeff Epp**
*Chairperson*

**Joe McDevitt**
*Vice Chairperson*

**Gregg Prather**
*Secretary*

**Peter Joyce**
*Treasurer*

BOARD MEMBERS

**Jeff Bizzack**
**Angela Kuhn**
**Tara McGrath**
**Father Charles Wright, O.S.B.**

HONORARY BOARD MEMBERS

**Dr. Patrick Gilligan**
**Helen Parsons**

# DONOR'S CORNER

**Dear Friends, Supporters, and Donors of Brother Benno's,**

This month's theme is Thankfulness—and I can think of no better time to express our gratitude to each of you.

Every day at Brother Benno's, we see the difference that generosity, compassion, and a willing heart can make. Because of you, we are able to provide food, clothing, and essential support to our neighbors experiencing homelessness and those in our community who are struggling to make ends meet.

Your generosity reminds us that even when circumstances are difficult, kindness endures. Every donation, every volunteer hour, and every act of support helps restore dignity, offer hope, and remind someone that they are not forgotten.

We are especially thankful that you choose to be part of this mission. The challenges facing those we serve are real, and the needs are great. But together, we continue to make a difference—one person, one meal, and one act of kindness at a time.

At Brother Benno's, we recognize that all we accomplish is made possible through God's grace and the generosity of people like you. We are truly blessed to have you alongside us.

On behalf of everyone at Brother Benno's, thank you for your continued faith in our mission and for helping us serve those who need us most.

God bless you all!

With heartfelt gratitude,

Mac



# BROTHER BENNO'S KIDSMAS PARTY 2026

The holiday season is just around the corner, and we are excited to announce that this year's **Brother Benno's Kidsmas Party** will take place on **Sunday, December 13th, from 12:00 PM to 2:00 PM** at the Brother Benno Center, located at **3260 Production Avenue in Oceanside.**

This special celebration is designed to bring holiday joy to low-income children, ages 0-14, throughout North County.

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# CAUGHT IN THE ACT! Community Partners, Supporters & Volunteers Making a Difference

*We deeply appreciate the support of our community partners, volunteers, and donors. Sadly, we only manage to document a small portion of these acts of kindness. If you have a photo or story you'd like to share, please send it to us at* **bbnewsletter@brotherbenno.org**. *We'd be delighted to feature your story!*




Thank you to the **Kite A Gilead Company** for the donation of 200 backpacks to Brother Benno's. These will be distributed to our un-housed guests within the Essential Services office throughout the upcoming season.




Thanks to the employees at **Ernest** for dropping off a generous donation of 700 units of underwear and 200 pairs of socks for our guests in October. Each year, the company has a giving campaign called "Givember" and Brother Benno's is the local charity chosen by Ernest in Vista. In addition, employees at Ernest serve breakfast as a team six times a year. Local business support means so much to the Brother Benno Foundation.

## LEADERSHIP TEAM

**Paul 'Mac' McNamara**
*Executive Director*

**DinaMarie Ahee**
*Deputy Executive Director*

**Alycia Anthony**
*Volunteer and Events Coordinator*

**Kathleen Diehlmann**
*Development Director*

**Bryan Fabricante**
*Accounting Director*

**Darryl Harris**
*Supportive Services Director*

**Emily Hasting**
*Director of Program Advancement*

**Marina Pozdnyakova**
*Clothing Services Director*

**Rob Sanchez**
*Operations Director*

**Jim Shlemmer**
*Recovery Director*

**Elias Velazquez**
*Information Director*

**Lileigh Waller**
*Director of Program Development.*

**FOR CONTACT INFORMATION**

**visit our website**

*"Being imprisoned by addiction is a living hell. By interacting with the men and women in our recovery program, we become part of the key that will open the gate to their freedom."*

HAROLD KUTLER

**Brother Benno Foundation Recovery Program**

**(760) 439-1244 ext.101**
recovery@brotherbenno.org

**Changing people's lives through the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous**

*At The Brother Benno Foundation, we respect everyone who comes to us for help – and many are working toward a fresh start in life. So while their stories are true, guest names and images may have been changed to protect their privacy. Thank you for understanding.*

# A DONATION THAT REACHED SIX SCHOOLS

Colored pencils, notebooks, lined paper and Expo markers reached local classrooms thanks to a generous donation from **Target.**

The Brother Benno Foundation shared the supplies with six schools: Pablo Tac Elementary School, Jefferson Middle School, Laurel Elementary School, Foussat Language Academy, Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School, and Mission Elementary School. *

**Gabriel Ballentine**, our Food Recovery and Redistribution Director, coordinated deliveries. After distributing the first round, he collected another 300 pounds from Target for additional deliveries.

At Jefferson, teachers were selecting classroom supplies when Gabriel arrived. One teacher was nearly moved to tears by the Expo markers—a reminder that these donations support teachers as well as students.

As Gabriel put it:

*"If only one kid doesn't have to go without this upcoming semester, then I feel I've done my job."*

Thank you, Target, for helping our community's classrooms.

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Last year, thanks to the incredible generosity of our community, more than **300 children** were able to participate, and we hope to make this year's event just as magical.

The afternoon will feature festive music, games, raffles, and a special visit from **Mr. and Mrs. Claus**.

Each invited child will receive:

- A stocking filled with fun surprises
- A $25 Walmart gift card
- Special holiday gifts
- Delicious treats

Events like Kidsmas parties are only possible because of the kindness and support of our community. We rely on dedicated volunteers and generous donors to help make the day a success.

We also gratefully accept donations, including: new books, new pajamas, stockings and stocking stuffers, new toys for all ages, monetary donations for gift cards, cookies, snacks, and refreshments.

Donations can be dropped off at the Center. Please include a note indicating that the items are for the Kidsmas Party.

On behalf of the Kidsmas Party Committee, thank you for your continued generosity. Together, we can make this holiday season brighter for hundreds of children and their families.

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## NOVEMBER SERVING TEAMS

*Thank you serving teams! The gifts of your time and caring service are received with heartfelt thanks.*

| MON | TUES | WED | THURS | FRI | SAT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 St. Elizabeth Seton #1 | 3 St. John The Evangelist | 4 Stephanie's Team | 5 Oceanside Pacific Kiwanis | 6 San Luis Rey Mission | 7 St. Thomas More |
| 9 North Coast Methodist | 10 Riverview Church | 11 Carlsbad Hi-Noon Rotary | 12 University of Notre Dame | 13 St. Patrick's | 14 OGS (Teachers & Friends) |
| 16 Sunrise Kiwanis of Vista | 17 St. John The Evangelist | 18 Friends of Brother Benno | 19 *OPEN* | 20 St. Elizabeth Seton #2 | 21 Girlfriend's Care |
| 23 Signal | 24 Rotary Club of San Marcos | 25 San Luis Rey Methodist | 26 *OPEN* | 27 Oceanside Sanctuary | 28 La Costa Valley Volunteers |
| 30 Oceanside Pacific Kiwanis | | | | | |

## URGENT NEEDS

**EMERGENCY BLANKETS**

**ADULT DIAPERS**

**BABY DIAPERS - SIZE 6**

**MEN'S & WOMEN'S UNDERWEAR**
small and medium

**SOCKS**

**Kindly deliver your donations to the Thrift Shop**

**MONDAY - FRIDAY**
**10:00 AM - 1:00 PM**

**SATURDAY**
**10:00 AM - NOON**

**VIEW our Donation Guide**




amazon wishlist

# MEMORIALS

## IN HONOR OF

Joyce Cerimele

Jovita Garcia

## IN MEMORY OF

Ream and Erik Braegger
Jacqueline Cooper
Robert DiCario
Deacon Ron Diem

Timothy Diem
Muriel Fahey
Benjamin Minor
Nysewander Family

Squirrell Family
Maria Beckman Viers

*The Perpetual Memorials list can be viewed at* https://tinyurl.com/BBFMemorials

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donors investing in our mission, and partners helping us put good food to good use. We are grateful for what you have helped us accomplish and excited about what we can achieve together.

One of the key initiatives driving our continued growth is our **Redistribution Organization Designation (RDO**), recently awarded through Feeding San Diego. This program allows us to extend our impact beyond the guests we serve directly by redistributing food to smaller food pantry organizations, helping them support their own communities.

This designation marks an exciting new chapter for Brother Benno's. Through this partnership, we aim to strengthen our redistribution network, expand our reach beyond North Oceanside and provide more communities throughout Southern California with access to quality food.

Since January, our RDO program has redistributed **106,360 pounds of quality food to our neighbors**. This milestone reflects the collective efforts of our team, volunteers, donors, and community partners.

As we celebrate a season of thankfulness, thank you for making this work possible. Your support helps us reduce food waste, strengthen our community, and uphold the dignity of every person we serve.

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but each participant must take the necessary steps toward independence.

Our greatest success is seeing graduates leave with more than sobriety. We want them equipped with the work ethic, financial responsibility, and spiritual foundation to support themselves, contribute to their communities, and build lives of purpose and dignity.

Because lasting recovery is not simply about learning to live without addiction. It is about learning to stand on your own.

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**Brother Benno Foundation, Inc.**
**P.O. Box 308, Oceanside, CA 92049**

Non-Profit Organization
**U.S. POSTAGE PAID**
Oceanside, California
**PERMIT NO. 166**



*Harold & Kay Kutler - Pictured, Brother Benno*

## BROTHER BENNO THRIFT SHOP

*Donate! Shop! Volunteer!*

**3955 Mission Avenue**
**Oceanside, CA 92058**
*(Mission between Douglas and Rancho Del Oro)*

## OPEN EVERY DAY!

**Monday - Saturday**
10:00 AM – 8:00 PM
**Sunday**
10:00 AM - 6:00 PM

## DONATE

**Monday - Friday**
10:00 AM – 1:00 PM
**Saturday**
10:00 AM – noon

***We welcome your saleable furniture items. Please call 760-967-7507 for free pickup.***

Please use the enclosed envelope to make your tax-deductible donation to The Brother Benno Foundation or donate online under *'How to Help'* at ***brotherbenno.org***. Use your preferred service - Apple Pay, Google Pay, Venmo, PayPal, credit card or bank transfer. **Please note the Brother Benno Foundation's mailing address:**

**The Brother Benno Foundation, P.O. Box 308, Oceanside, CA 92049-0308**

## By the numbers: Your gifts are meeting needs

| | SEPTEMBER 2026 | OUR 42nd YEAR | | SEPTEMBER 2026 | OUR 42nd YEAR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Meals | 8,646 | 5,257,771 | Blankets | 118 | 58,148 |
| Market Visits | 3,411 | 87,064 | Tarps | 0 | 11,490 |
| Clothing | 3,970 | 1,679,181 | ID Vouchers | 65 | 12,194 |
| Showers | 412 | 303,021 | Lbs. of Food Rescued | 107,041 | 8,537,594 |
| Bus Passes | 113 | 96,984 | HUGS | 1,000 | 1,057,244 |